

NAVY BASEBALL



FEBRUARY 2005

All HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

Counter Drug
Operations



22 USS *Halyburton's* War: Counter-Drug Operations

February

[Features]



[On the Front Cover]

SN Jose Leon, (right) a member of USS *Halyburton's* Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team, works with U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 boarding members like GM3 Scott Luks during counter-drug operations mission.

Photo by JO1(SCW/SW) James G. Pinsky

For Sailors aboard USS *Halyburton* (FFG 40), America's war on illegal drugs just got personal. During her scheduled six-month deployment, the Mayport-based frigate is participating in Operation *Caper Focus*, a joint, interagency counter-narcotics mission, instead of more traditional missions like expeditionary strike group support.

Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky

[Next Month]

All Hands follows Navy legalmen on their journey from the front office to the front lines in Baghdad as they help set up Iraq's judicial system.

[Departments]

Eye on History — 10
Focus on Service — 36
Eye on the Fleet — 38
The Final Word — 40



Photo by PH3 Antoine Thiemistocleous



Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky

32 The Rookie

The shortstop thinks it looks like an out. He breaks to his left with three quick strides and a belly-flop dive. He lands with a jersey full of dirt and a fistful of ball, and ... a voice cries out from the crowd, "Wake up man! We need more trays and silverware up here!" With that, Seaman Apprentice Frank Kuras knows his daydream is officially over. But for Kuras, this happens a lot after spending his first summer in the Navy stationed on a baseball diamond.



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Rebecca McClung, left, and Chief Hospital Corpsman Jim Jones, right, give medical attention to an injured Indonesian man after being medically evacuated from a coastal village on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. Medical teams from USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), Carrier Air Wing Two (CVW-2) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) set-up a triage site located on Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base, in Banda Aceh, Sumatra. The two teams worked together with members of the Australian Air Force to provide initial medical care to victims of the Tsunami-stricken coastal regions. The *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group is currently operating in the Indian Ocean off the waters of Indonesia and Thailand.

Photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Jordon R. Beesley

CNO Praises Partnership Between Sea Services

The Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are working together more closely today than they ever have before to confront the myriad threats America and its allies face around the world, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) ADM Vern Clark said during a Fall panel of sea service leaders.

Appearing together with Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee and Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thomas Collins, the CNO told the Marine Corps Association and U.S. Naval Institute Forum that the current global threat environment is blurring the lines between the services, and the roles they play in the defense of the nation at home and aboard.

“People want to draw the world up in perfect, finite pieces. My view is the world doesn’t exist that way today and will

exist less that way in the future,” Clark said. “We speak to this principle throughout our joint discussions, that we need to blur all of those lines because the world does not exist with great clarity to where I can say what’s on this side of the line is mine and what’s on this side of the line is (Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thomas Collins). It just isn’t that kind of globe anymore.”

To more effectively employ the combined defense capabilities of the Navy and the Coast Guard, Clark said the two services are working on Maritime Domain Awareness to protect the nation’s shores.

“That’s a big part of what our domain awareness is all about,” the CNO said. “Tom and I are now working on this effort (Maritime Domain Awareness) that has now grown to the interagency level.”

Clark said the Navy is also operating more closely with its number one joint partner, the Marine Corps, to go on offense in the littorals - the transition area between the sea and land. Clark added that the Maritime Pre-Positioning Force (Future) would play a key role in the Navy/Marine Corps team’s ability to base forces at sea.

“A key issue for us is what’s going on across that key transition zone between sea and land,” Clark said.

The CNO said the Navy/Marine Corps team must better

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exploit the maritime domain—the world’s oceans and the air-space above them—to bring joint capabilities to bear that are capable of deterring or defeating current and future threats.

“My view of the future is, we’ve got to be out and about,” Clark said. “We are and will continue to be able to bring the capability from the domain that allows us freedom to maneuver. We are, fundamentally, a maneuverable force. For this nation to have the kind of capability that it needs, it must be able to exploit the maneuver space that we own.”

For more on the CNO, visit www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/.

Story by JOC Walter T. Ham IV who is assigned to public affairs office, Chief of Naval Operations.

Sailor Suggestions on Effectiveness, Efficiency Make a Difference

Sailors can make a difference and create a more effective and efficient Navy by finding more practical ways to accomplish their missions, and report them through the Beneficial Suggestions (BeneSugs) and Military Cash Awards Programs (MilCap).

During a recent Echelon II visit by Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) ADM Vern Clark, Commander, Navy Region North-east leaders pointed to a couple examples of how Sailors found significant efficiencies in their region through the BeneSugs and MilCap programs.

“We have extraordinary people with great skills in our Navy,” Clark said in an interview later that day. “What this all means to me is we can have the greatest

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Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), ADM Vern Clark (right), addresses a discussion panel on the war on terror along with Commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Thomas H. Collins and Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Michael Hagee. The sea service chiefs were on hand to answer all questions during Forum 2004, hosted by the Marine Corps Association and the U.S. Naval Institute.

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Around the Fleet

technology in the world – which we do – but none of it matters without the genius of our people.”

As subject matter experts in their respective fields, Sailors have the unique experience and insight into the processes that keep the Navy in motion. By taking their ideas on how to improve operations, enhance safety or save resources and putting them on the OPNAV 5305/1 form, Sailors can make money while saving the Navy money. In return, Sailors not only benefit from a better Navy but can also earn up to \$25,000 in awards, depending on the safety or financial impact of their suggestion.

“Our goal is to enhance our mission accomplishment and deliver a combat-credible Navy now and in the future,” Clark said in his 2004 Guidance. “It demands enterprise-wide approaches and innovation to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in afloat and ashore operations, readiness and infrastructure.”

As a part of Sea Enterprise, an enabling initiative of Sea Power 21, the CNO has called for a culture that rewards greater effectiveness and removes institutional hurdles that block innovation.

Giving the Sailor and the taxpayer the best possible return on

their investment in the Navy is the CNO’s goal, and the BeneSug and MilCap programs are another way Sailors can help achieve it.

More information on the Beneficial Suggestions and Military Cash Awards Programs can be found in OPNAV Instruction 1650.8C. For more information on the CNO, go to www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/.

Story by JOC Walter T. Ham IV who is assigned to public affairs office, Chief of Naval Operations.

Sailors Allowed Flexibility for Exam Deadlines

Commanders may request the administration of substitute exams through Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center (NETPDTC) when mission requirements keep Sailors from taking a test by the scheduled date.

NETPDTC will consider all requests, even those submitted after published deadlines, to ensure all eligible Sailors have an opportunity to take their exam.

“Commanders have the latitude to administer substitute exams when operational tempo legitimately interferes with Sailors preparing for or taking the exams on the scheduled date,” said LCDR Juliet Cook, the Navy’s advancement planner for the Chief of Naval Personnel. “NETPDTC considers all requests, even those submitted after deadlines, to ensure our Sailors have a fair opportunity to take an exam.”

Valid reasons for requesting substitute exams include emergency leave, sick in quarters or hospitalization, and operational commitments, especially deployed units in combat areas.

Cook spoke of a recent example of a forward-deployed hospital corpsman that had his exam forwarded from detachment to detachment for about six weeks. The Sailor was finally able to take the exam in July, four months after the scheduled March exam date.

If a Sailor, such as this corpsman, takes a delayed exam with coordination and approval by NETPDTC, the answer sheet is scanned and scored for advancement and the Sailor, if eligible, will receive backdated pay and time-in-rate.

For more information on

substitute exams, see NAVADMIN 204/04 on the Web at: www.bupers.navy.mil/navadmin/navo4/navo4204.txt.

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

CPD Introduces Personal Financial Management Curriculum

With the goal of making financially savvy Sailors, and preparing them to meet life’s growing financial challenges, the Center for Personal Development (CPD) is developing a continuum of learning based on its Personal Financial Management (PFM) program.

The continuum will populate the Personal Development Vector of the 5 Vector Model and will feature Navy-required financial learning events, as well as advanced courses to be delivered through Navy eLearning, and available on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO).

CPD has partnered with several Navy entities to develop the continuum of study, which

begins immediately following initial training and includes the basics of banking management, budgeting, insurance, investing, and the types of credit and their uses. Follow-on courses include advanced financial planning, investment instruments, retirement and estate planning, and real estate transaction planning.

In March 2002, the Department of Defense recognized the Navy’s efforts to prepare Sailors to plan for the future and protect themselves against sometimes unscrupulous business practices, and named the PFM program a DOD Best Practice.

“We are continuing to build on that success, and are developing more resources for Sailors and their families to take advantage

of,” said Kim Thompson, CPD/PFM program director. “By bringing all these resources together under one umbrella program and delivering them in chunks along the Personal Development Vector, Sailors will have access to the most relevant information at the most appropriate times throughout their careers.”

To learn more about the Navy’s personal financial management resources, visit the Center for Personal Development page on Navy Knowledge Online at www.nko.navy.mil.

Story courtesy of JO1 Jd Walter who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Personnel Development Command, Virginia Beach, Va.

Shipmates



Master Chief Constructionman Martin Yingling, Chief Equipment Operator Darion Williams and Steelworker 3rd Class Justin Sasser (from left to right) received Purple Hearts in recognition of wounds sustained in action while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The three were injured through indirect fire from a rocket attack last September while working in Camp Fallujah, Iraq. Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers RADM Michael Loose recently presented the awards. Steelworker 3rd Class Eric Knott, who was killed during the same attack, was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart last September.

Ricky’s Tour

By JO1 Mike Jones

www.rickystour.com



The shape you're in doesn't have to be earned by running. Push-ups aren't the only way to tone a chest. Flat stomachs don't only come from sit-ups. There is something out there that will make your heart race. All you need to do is find it. So...

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Top Performers Sought for President’s Mess

The Presidential Food Service Department is looking for the Navy’s top culinary specialists (CS) to work in the White House Presidential Mess. Forty-nine Navy Culinary Specialists (CS) work in the White House, providing the nation’s leader with everything from meals at the Presidential Mess to valet services. Recently, members of the White House Presidential Mess traveled to San Diego and Naval Air Station Lemoore to look for the elite members of the CS fraternity.

“We’re looking for the best of the best of the Navy,” said LT Jon Oringdulph, the director of Presidential Food Service. “We need the people we place in charge of taking care of the commander in chief to have unprecedented attention to detail. We need Sailors who are willing to work extremely hard, have a great attitude, and maintain a very low profile.”

Culinary specialists at the White House work in a variety of tasks. The Logistics Department purchases all of the food and brings it onto the White House grounds. The Main Mess Facility provides between 250-325 gourmet meals a day for the president and his staff, including breakfast, lunch and carryout meals in the evening.

In addition, two senior enlisted culinary specialists are standing by at all times for the president to provide valet services and ensure all travel needs are met. These CSs travel on Air Force One, to Camp David and the private residence. Long days are expected of staff CSs during the six-day workweek.

“We are looking for people with a lot of heart, people who don’t have the words ‘I can’t,’ in

their vocabularies,” Oringdulph said.

According to CSCM (SS) Glen Maes, the deputy director and command master chief of the Presidential Food Service division, there is a need for top culinary specialists in the E-6 and E-5 pay grades (“hot-running” E-4s are also encouraged to apply). To be considered for White House duty, Sailors must have a Letter of Recommendation from their commanding officer; be able to obtain a Top Secret clearance with Single Scope Background Investigation; a complete medical screening and copies of their last five personnel evaluations.

Due to the sensitive nature of these positions, an intensive security background check is conducted on each applicant selected for the position. Background checks take between nine to 18 months on average, so it’s best to apply inside of two years away from a projected rotation date.

Maes added that the Presidential Mess is also working to raise the standard of service in the fleet.

“It’s a win-win situation,” said Maes. “It gives us the opportunity to have the best of the best out there. We train these guys up in leadership, mentorship and give them the best professional knowledge, and then send them back to the fleet.”

While in San Diego, the Presidential Food Service team interviewed area candidates at the Navy Food Management Team San Diego (NFMT) offices, as well as aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76). Maes said the Presidential Food Service team will be making a similar stop in Norfolk.

For information on program eligibility/requirements, contact the White House Presidential Food Service team at (202) 757-1285 or via email at games@whmo.mil.

Story by Ron Flanders, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, San Diego

Crater Repair Project No Problem For “Can Do!” Seabees In Iraq

In true “Can Do!” spirit, Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 have made permanent repairs to 31 giant-size craters at the Al Asad airfield—a military runway critical to operations in northern Iraq.

The airfield, once a military hub accommodating F/A-18 *Hornet* fighters, C-130 *Hercules* and C-5 *Galaxy* cargo planes, had been out of service with battle damage for more than a year when the Seabees moved in.

According to LT Donald Panthen, assistant operations officer, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Engineer Group,

the Seabees’ performance has been outstanding despite a number of project difficulties.

“The Seabees completed this job ahead of schedule and in spite of material shortages, contractor delays and insurgent activity,” Panthen said.

When NMCB 23 officially took on the project in October, work was already behind schedule by more than three weeks, and additional existing craters had been added to the project.

Permanent crater repairs require extensive measures, such as cutting and removing the damaged pavement adjacent to the craters, excavating the soil, filling the hole and compacting with structural fill material, and then capping the craters with concrete.

“It’s comparable to patching giant potholes, each five feet deep and up to 80 feet across,” said LT Stephen Fichter, project officer. The crew produced more than 3,600 cubic yards of concrete for the job, utilizing more than 6,000 tons of patching material. “Operating in a war zone adds



Photo by PH2 (AV) Michael D. Heckman

VADM John G. Cotton, Commander Naval Reserve Force,

views a Seabee project at the Al Asad airfield in western Iraq. Reserve Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 have taken on this extensive project, which includes making permanent repairs to 39 swimming pool-size impact craters on different sections of the airfield’s runways. The craters have left the airfield inoperable for more than a year.

another layer of difficulty to an already challenging project,” Fichter said.

According to Fichter, quality sand and gravel are in short supply in the Al Anbar province, and there are only a few nearby quarries for obtaining the scarce raw material.

“Getting stone and sand from the quarries is dangerous due to the security situation in that area,” he said. “We can’t just order up material and have it delivered. Here, we have to go and get our own stone and sand.”

In addition, an explosive ordnance disposal team must visit supply sites prior to loading material to check for the presence of improvised explosive devices

and supply convoys must travel at night with tight security.

In spite of these obstacles, the Desert Bees completed one runway three weeks ahead of schedule.

“From the start, we’ve empowered our Seabees on the ground to find what works and get the job done,” Fichter said.

The Seabees produced their own formulas for concrete, considering that the quality of sand and gravel vary widely from source to source.

“It’s like trying to make cookies all taste the same, even though your ingredients are different in every batch,” Fichter said. “We keep adjusting our recipe, depending on what kind of material we have at the time.”

The Seabees produced concrete for the project using only two “crete-mobiles,” a major accomplishment considering the diminutive mobile concrete mixers are designed for a much smaller workload.

“This project has not been easy,” Fichter said. “I think our positive attitude has been a key aspect of this project. We have established good working relationships with fellow Soldiers and Marines, so when we need repair parts or additional equipment, they are glad to help out. Good will goes a long way and is easily built using the diverse

skills found in ordinary Seabees.”

For related news, visit the Commander, 1st Naval Construction Division Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/1ncd.

Story by JOC Suzanne Speight, who is assigned to public affairs with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group, Al Asad, Iraq

Eye on History

1944 ► Dirigibles form a “V” over Naval Air Station Moffett Field, Calif., during training maneuvers. The dirigible shadows on the ground resemble giant bombs.



Exceptional parenting

When Kaori Tutewol first moved to America from Japan, she was completely lost. She did not speak English fluently and navigating her way through Seattle's interstate highways seemed impossible. It was like being transferred to another planet. With her husband, Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class James Tutewol, deployed aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) on an extended deployment, for the first time in her life, she had a glimpse of what her then-7-year-old autistic son Kaili's world must be like.

Story by
JO2 Cheri Boggs,
photos by
PH3 Antoine
Themistocleous

"It was the most overwhelming experience of my life," Kaori said. "I spent most of my days lost, trying to find my way to different hospitals. I would try to ask for directions but most people could not understand me. I asked myself, 'is this what Kaili goes through every day?' Dealing with a deployment and moving to a new area with a child with special needs can break you mentally if you do not have help."

When he was four years old, Kaori's son

Kaili was diagnosed with autism, a complex neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain. Soon after, her family enrolled in the Navy's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), a mandatory enrollment program designed to assist Sailors by addressing the special needs of their family member during the assignment process.

Navy detailers use the EFMP enrollment data to pinpoint assignments to locations

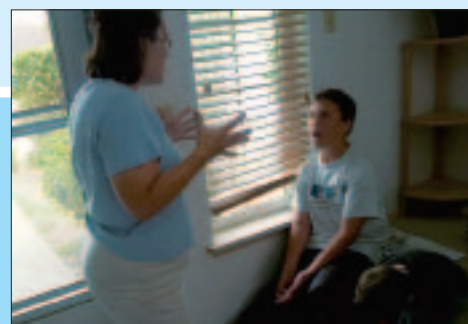


▲ **There is always enough Mom** to go around. Kaori helps Raymond with personal details like brushing his teeth and combing his hair. She makes it a point not to help Kaili with such issues because doing these things on his own will help him to become more independent and give him more confidence, tools he will need to survive in his autistic world.

► **Thanks to the Tutewol**, Welsh and Shadden families, their weekly Exceptional family member (EFM) support group provides EFM families with information about local medical facilities, schools and other special programs in the area.



► **Twelve-year-old** Ryan Welsh is required to take eight pills each day.



▲ **Tracey explains** to Ryan, 12, that he can't go outside because of his bad behavior.

► **Thirteen-year-old** Jake Welsh takes a moment before school to watch television with his youngest brother Brendon, 5. An exceptional student, Jake finds it hard to shine under the spotlight of his two younger brothers who require so much attention.

with appropriate resources that address the Sailor or family member's special need. In the Tutewols' case, they must always receive orders to a location with a major military medical treatment facility.

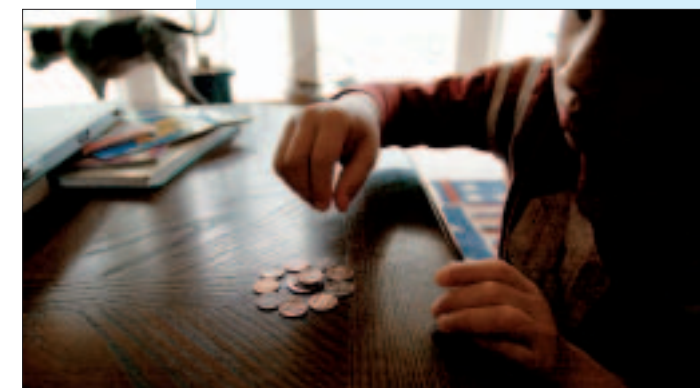
Soon after arriving at Naval Station Bremerton, Kaori discovered that the area's major military treatment facility, Everett Naval Hospital, was nearly an hour's drive away. To make matters worse, there were no child psychologists assigned to the hospital. She immediately contacted the hospital's EFM coordinator, who provided her with a list of child psychologists and school programs in the local area.

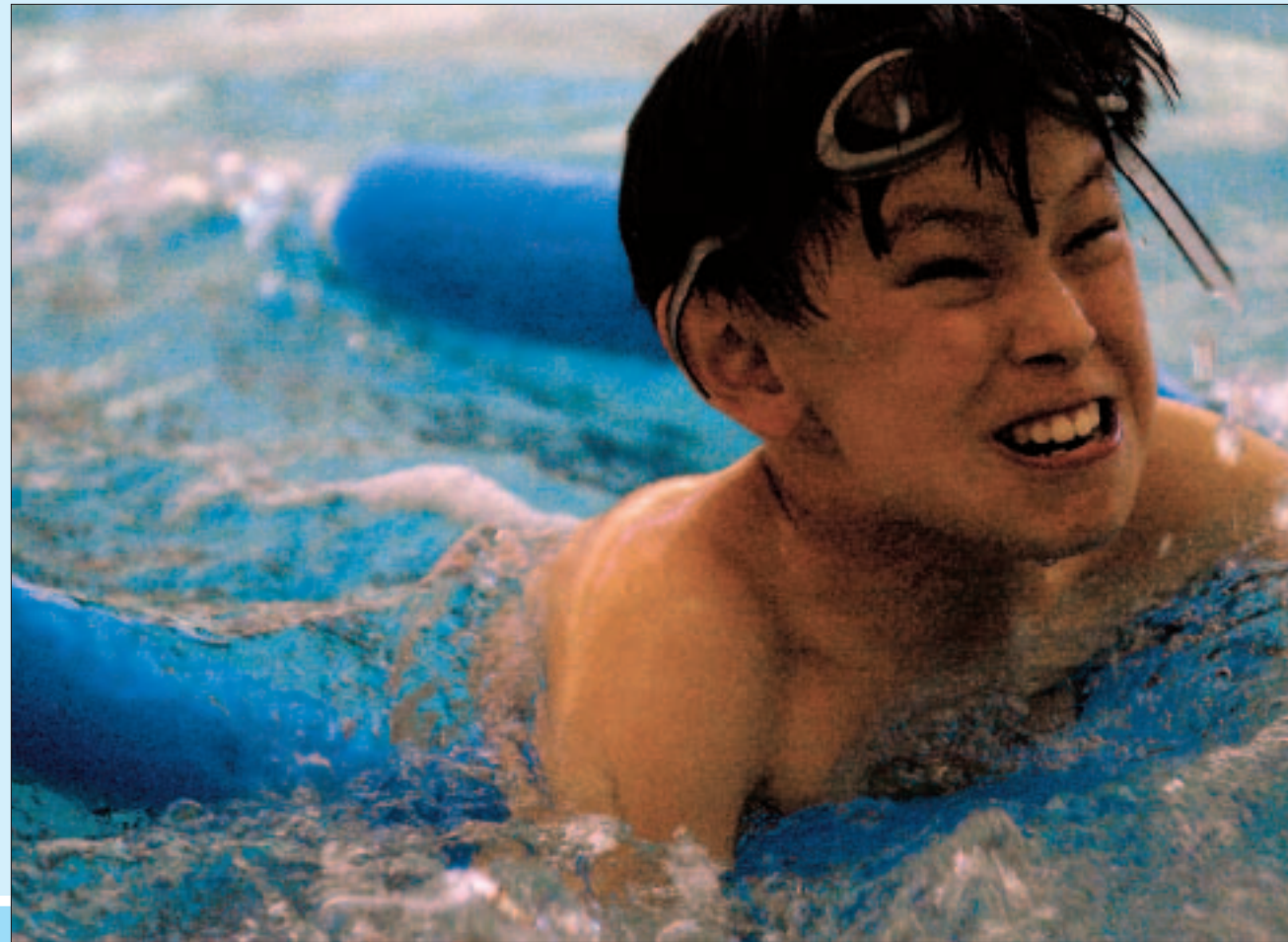
"The list was a mile long," said Kaori. "It took weeks to find a doctor who was accepting TRICARE insurance. My son was going without medical attention the entire

time. The situation was very frustrating because I also have my other children to look after. I knew that if I was having such a difficult time, then there must be other families dealing with the same issues.

Soon after, Kaori met Tracey Welsh, *Abraham Lincoln's* Ombudsman and wife of Electronics Technician 1st Class Todd Welsh. Two of the Welshs' three children are assigned to the EFMP. Brendon, 4, diagnosed with William's Syndrome, a rare genetic condition which causes medical and developmental problems, and Ryan, 12, diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by multiple involuntary movements and uncontrollable vocalizations called tics. According

▼ **Although Raymond** has not been diagnosed with autism or any other developmental disability, his mother, Kaori, often notices many autistic behaviors. Like his brother, Kaili, he often becomes preoccupied with putting things in order, or placing objects like pennies in patterns.





◀ **Ryan Welsh sits quietly** and listens to his mother as she attempts to diffuse a meltdown.

▲ **Kaili Tutewol** gives it his all during swimming lessons at the Naval Station Everett swimming pool. Although his autism does not allow him to swim at the level of a normal 11-year-old, he still enjoys taking lessons along with his 6-year-old brother, Raymond.



▲ **Activities like baseball** help challenged children have a sense of normalcy in their lives. The Tutewols' as well as many other Navy families in the Bremerton area participate in the organized league.

to Tracey, the military treatment facility had the services that Brendon needed, but when it came time to find a doctor for Ryan, she experienced the same difficulties as Kaori.

"It took six months to find a psychotherapist in the area who was accepting TRICARE," said Tracey. "Ryan went without his medication because his prescriptions could only be given by a psychiatrist. His mood controls the mood of the entire house because his medication helps control his 'meltdowns.'"

Meltdowns are something both families deal with on a regular basis. They are periods of uncontrollable rage brought on by their children's medical conditions.

They include kicking, screaming, violent threats and behavior. Ryan has punched holes in walls and screamed obscenities, while Kaili is often sent home from school, or dismissed from the school bus for making violent threats.

"It's so important that kids like Ryan don't have a lapse in services because their therapy and their medication are important to their development and the daily lives of their family," Tracey explained. "I could only imagine how many other families experience the same difficulties."

Kaori and Tracey got together to form Naval Station Bremerton's first EFM support group. During the weekly meetings, they

provide families with information about local medical facilities, schools, and special programs in the local area.

"We try to give the parents helpful information so they don't keep running into the same problems we did," Kaori said. "We pass out copies of *The Americans with Disabilities Act* and we keep an updated list of local-area

New Web Site Assists Sailors with Exceptional Family Members

The Exceptional Family Member (EFM) program recently unveiled its new Web site. The site allows families, EFM sponsors and medical treatment facility personnel access to EFM category information.

Through the Internet, EFM officials said they have improved a program designed to meet the needs of the Navy members and their families by putting the "right person in the right place at the right time."

The site can now serve as a query tool that will enable sponsors to negotiate orders with detailers more efficiently and effectively.

"The benefits to family members and sponsors will be apparent from the moment they access the Web page," said Marcia Hagood, senior EFM program analyst. "Of particular value is an expansive section detailing the differences in EFM categories."

"We have many resources available to the family members on the site to help them understand which category they may fall into," Hagood added. "If they've had difficulty finding that information, the site breaks it down for them."

The EFM program was created in 1989 to provide service members quality opportunities for assignment to locations where a family member's special medical and/or educational needs could be met. Orders written for program members are reviewed by EFM program managers, who approve or disapprove the move based on availability of facilities for the family member. More than 19,000 Navy families are currently enrolled in the program.

"We're proud of the fact that the Navy is the only service branch with a program like EFM," said Hagood. "No other service ensures their special needs families' orders are reviewed by a specific agency prior to assignment."

EFM program sponsors or spouses can register with the site, complete a personal profile and obtain a password to find more information regarding their category status. Once registered, the sponsor will be notified when they need to take action regarding their status and will receive general information about the program itself. Additionally, EFM program coordinators at medical commands can view all EFM program enrollees assigned to their area.

"The Web site will provide the medical community the benefit of being as prepared as possible for a special needs family well before they arrive at their next duty station," Hagood said.

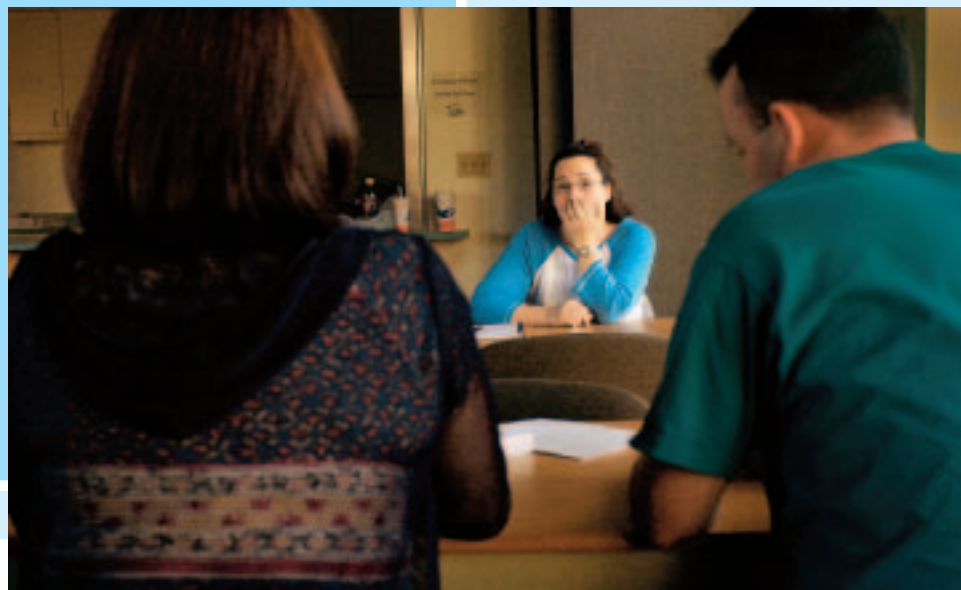
Hagood stressed that anonymity features have been built into the Web site to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Military or family members who have questions about the EFM program can visit the Web site at <https://efm.persnet.navy.mil/EFM>.

Story by JOC(SW/AW) Bill Houlihan who is assigned to Navy Personnel Command Communications, Millington, Tenn.



▲ Although Kaili's medical situation requires a lot of attention, equal time must be shared with all members of the family. Here, six-year-old Raymond Tutewol tries to give his mom, Kaori, a wet hug following swimming class.

► Tracey Welsh listens to Amanda and Jerry Shadden during a support group meeting. Behavioral problems for the Shaddens' 14-year-old son, Christopher, have become such a problem at school, Amanda attends school with him each day.



child advocates and doctors who accept TRICARE.

While receiving helpful information is appreciated during the meetings, for most parents the best part about the support group is being able to talk to others who understand what they are going through.

"It really helps to be able to come here

and know that you are not alone," said Amanda Shadden, whose son Christopher, 14, is enrolled in the EFMP. Her husband, Personnelman 1st Class (SW) Jerry Shadden, is also stationed aboard *Abraham Lincoln*. "I have to attend school with my son every day so that he can make it

through the day. I don't think anyone else but the people in the support group would understand that."

During the meetings, families not only share problems, they also try to find solutions. Many parents find it difficult to understand medical forms and documents.

Kaori is always there, armed with her electronic dictionary, to help translate medical information into simple terms.

"I never go anywhere without my dictionary because I always want to know what is going on," said Kaori. "With children like ours, the best tool is to know and understand the law. You have to be able to speak up for your children because they can't speak for themselves. There are so many laws and so many rules. It's almost

like reading the Bible. Everything is open to interpretation."

Naval Station Bremerton EFM coordinator, Chief Hospital Corpsman Renee Rigoroso, couldn't agree more. According to Rigoroso, the most important thing families can do to make their transition easier is understand the law.

"I always tell the parents that they are the best advocate for their children," Rigoroso said. "Many Sailors may not

understand exactly what the EFMP does and does not do. The purpose of the EFMP coordinator is to make sure that all qualified EFMP personnel are enrolled in the program and the information is sent to the detailers. We also can help to point families in the right direction if they have questions, but the rest is up to them. The most important thing is to plan ahead and research the area," he added.

The Welch family agrees.

"You can never pick orders at the last minute," said Todd Welsh. "There is too much planning to be done. You have to make sure the services you need are available. You have to make sure your family is taken care of before you deploy."

While it may seem difficult for most parents to even imagine their children living with incurable medical conditions, that's the reality for both the Tutewol and Welsh families, as well as many others. Days filled with medication, medical appointments, school visits and meltdowns along with the everyday worries that parenting brings are almost certain now and in the future. And while knowing they have a long, bumpy road ahead, they still find the time to make someone else's exceptional journey through parenthood a little smoother. ☞

Boggs is a journalist and Themistocleous is a photographer's mate assigned to All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200502/feature_1/



◀ **Weekday mornings** are a busy time for the Tutewol household. A typical day starts at 6 a.m. Extra time must be included for those difficult mornings that often occur. A good morning start can help to create a good day at school for Kaili.



◀ **U.S. Coast Guard BM3 Travis Katzer**

is a member of Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 402 based out of Miami. The small unit is embarked on USS *Halyburton* to carry out law enforcement actions related to the search and seizure of illegal narcotics trafficking.

Halyburton's War: Counter-Drug Operations

Story and photos by JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky

For Sailors aboard USS *Halyburton* (FFG 40), America's war on illegal drugs just got personal.

The Mayport-based fast frigate is participating in Operation *Caper Focus*, a joint, interagency counter-narcotics mission, during her scheduled six-month deployment instead of more traditional missions like expeditionary strike group support.

"Stopping the flow of drugs onto our streets is enough reason for this mission," said CDR Herbert M. Hadley, *Halyburton's* commanding officer.

But for *Halyburton's* crew, this trip means more to many of its Sailors than a typical cruise because it gives parents, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, a chance to stop an enemy that has haunted playgrounds, street corners and families lives for years.

"Chasing down drug smugglers matters.



◀ **U.S. Coast Guard LEDET personnel**

aboard USS *Halyburton* inventory a bale of cocaine recovered by U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Rush* (WHEC 723). The cocaine, fuel and detainees were classified as evidence and transferred to USS *Halyburton* by Coast Guard personnel to allow *Rush* to make emergency repairs.

It matters a lot to me," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class Christopher Jefferson, "because I have two little (children) who one day might encounter drugs, and I don't want them to."

Jefferson's hope is one that has transcended several generations.

America has waged a war on drugs since former President Richard M. Nixon named drug abuse as "public enemy No. 1

in the United States," in 1971.

America has battled the drug cartels ever since. Recently, when intelligence reports revealed that terrorists received some of their funding through illegal narcotics, and that the same tricks used to smuggle cocaine were helping terrorist operatives sneak through U.S. borders, the focus on hunting down drug smugglers took on a new intensity.



▲ **USS Halyburton (FFG 40)** transits the Panama Canal en route to her SOUTHCOM area of operations to conduct counter-drug operations with Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South and COMUSNAVSO.

▼ **U.S. Coast Guard BM3 Travis Katzer, LEDET 402,** leaves an SH-60B after conducting counter-narcotics flight operations. The Coast Guard embarked a law enforcement detachment aboard USS Halyburton (FFG 40) to carry out boardings of suspected drug smuggling and drug smuggling support vessels.



Now, more than 30 years later, *Halyburton's* crew is thrilled to get their chance to fight the drug cartels—face to face.

“We’re not just doing training missions in the Jacksonville, Fla., ops area,” said Quartermaster 2nd Class Steven Schulwolf. “People are excited to come up on the bridge because we’re doing real missions and everyone wants to be the ones on watch when we make a big bust.”

Schulwolf found himself caught up in the excitement of counter-drug operations as well.

“I used to never want to stand watch,” said Schulwolf, “and now the only reason I’m ever happy to leave the bridge is because I’m exhausted, not bored.”

But the excitement of actually catching a drug smuggler burns on a slow fuse because hunting them is a long, tedious process.

“Before our first bust,” said Schulwolf, “everyone thought counter-drug operations were boring. It seemed like we were just going from one end of the ocean to the other to see if the water was still blue.”

Halyburton's mission is simple: to intercept and provide boarding opportunities

of suspected drug traffickers and their support vessels for the U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 402, Miami, embarked on the 20-year old ship.

But, wait. The Coast Guard?

To facilitate counter-drug operations, *Halyburton* has a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment embarked and both fall under tactical control of the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South, Key West, Fla., while the ship remains under the operational control of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO), Mayport, Fla.

If Sailors, like Schulwolf, thought sailing the open ocean was tedious, an actual boarding process might not raise their pulse right away. Any one phase of the four-stage law enforcement process can take a matter of minutes or countless hours to complete.

The need for patience comes from the process of hunting the vessels themselves. JIATF South and the operational chain of command take no liberties with details to make sure any ship *Halyburton* targets is worth all of the Sailor’s efforts. After all, going through all the work of catching a vessel and not yielding evidence ruins

everyone’s day.

According to LT Brian Diebold, *Halyburton's* combat systems officer, “The most frustrating part of counter-drug operations is “putting the pieces together, taking down the target and not finding any drugs.”

For weeks, many near-miss boarding opportunities eroded the crew’s eagerness. But, everything changed once the first bust came.

“After our first bust,” said Schulwolf, “the next time we set law enforcement Phase 1, I heard cheers erupt from the galley. Everyone knew what was going on.”

During any U.S. Coast Guard boarding opportunity one of the busiest teams on the ship becomes *Halyburton's* own Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team. The specially trained unit supplements the U.S. Coast Guard’s boarding team by providing security during boardings and post-seizure watches.

“Being a part of *Halyburton's* VBSS team has definitely been a unique experience,” said Seaman Jose Leon, VBSS team member. “My first real boarding opened my eyes to what doing this is all about. It helped

► **U.S. Coast Guard GM3 Scott Luks** wears a patch honoring fallen Coast Guard boarding team member PO3 Nathan Bruckenthal. Bruckenthal was assigned to Law Enforcement Detachment 403 from Tactical Law Enforcement Team South in Miami, Fla. He was killed in an attack that began when suicide bombers in boats attacked pumping stations in the Persian Gulf. Bruckenthal was the first Coast Guardsman to die in combat since Vietnam.





◀ **USS Halyburton's (FFG 40) Commanding Officer**, CDR Herbert Hadley and U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 Officer-in-Charge LTJG Roger Onenhieser discuss a suspected drug smuggling support ship off *Halyburton's* starboard bow. The Navy and Coast Guard worked together in a counter narcotics operation called *Caper Focus* which is designed to decrease the influx of illegal narcotics to America's streets.

▼▼ **During counter-drug operations**, USS *Halyburton's* combat information center (CIC) stays busy conducting ship's operations and coordinating JIATF South tasking through the embarked Coast Guard LEDET on board.

▼ **DC3 Danny Sullivan receives oxygen** from HMC Edwin Hanson to recover from carbon monoxide exposure while conducting rescue and salvage operations aboard a detained suspected drug smuggling vessel. Sullivan and his rescue and salvage teammate, DC3 Cameron Lair, helped stop flooding of the vessel so U.S. Coast Guard LEDET personnel could safely search it for evidence.



having the Coast Guard on board because they are experts at what they do, and they helped train us during the deployment for the kinds of situations they knew we would encounter.”

During the Coast Guard LEDET's first boarding of *Halyburton's* deployment, investigations revealed the small fishing vessel suspected by JIATF South to be a refueler for smaller “go-fast” drug smuggling boats. Consequently, evidence and the vessel's crew were detained by the Coast Guard and handed over to proper authorities.

That first bust brought plenty of excitement, and a little too much carbon monoxide, for two *Halyburton* Sailors, Damage Controlmen 3rd Class Danny Sullivan and Cameron Lair, *Halyburton's* rescue and salvage team, who were called upon by the Coast Guard to save the suspect vessel from sinking.

“During our first boarding, the ship was not seaworthy,” said U.S. Coast Guard Machinery Technician 3rd Class Johnny Ridad, LEDET 402, Miami. “So we called for the ship's rescue and assistance team to stop the flooding. They dewatered the vessel with a P-100 pump. *Halyburton's* engineers were a lot more experienced and knowledgeable, so they were able to stabilize the vessel quickly so we could conduct our search.”

“When we got over there,” said Sullivan, “the water seemed to be coming in and going out, but it was taking on more water than what was going out so we used our pump to overcome the flooding rate. It was hard to get suction because our pump is designed for dewatering something on our ship, not a little boat like this. We made it work though.”

While the Sailors battled the flooding in the engine room, the poorly maintained engines and living conditions produced fumes that made the boarding team nauseated, requiring oxygen from the corpsman back aboard *Halyburton*.

In addition to a compliment of U.S. Coast Guard LEDET boarding personnel, *Halyburton* brought an air detachment from Helicopter Anti-Submarine Light (HSL) 48, Det. 7 and an SH-60B *Seahawk* LAMPS III



◀ **AT3 Samuel Hays** works in the close confines of USS *Halyburton*'s port hangar bay to prepare their SH-60B *Seahawk* LAMPS III helicopter for counter-drug flight operations the following day. "The helicopter is our best 'bad guy' catcher," said LT Brian Diebold, *Halyburton*'s combat systems officer, "because it allows the ship to see over the horizon through its radar and the HAWKLINK system."

▶ **CTT3 Mark Arroyo** calls out to USS *Halyburton*'s bridge that one of the suspects on board a vessel is wielding a knife. Lookouts man the ship's weather deck around the clock, but double and triple their surveillance during boarding operations to help keep U.S. Coast Guard and Navy personnel safe.



helicopter, stationed in Mayport, Fla., to enhance the ability to find, track and catch drug smuggling vessels.

"Our helicopter is the No. 1 'bad guy catcher,'" said Diebold, "because it allows us to see over the horizon with its radar.

But *Halyburton*'s helicopter is just one of many assets on board this "small boy," that make frigates quintessential for counter-drug operations.

"*Halyburton* is ideal for counter-drug operations because she's fast, maneuverable and very good in littoral waters," said Diebold. He specifically noted that *Halyburton*'s fire control system, the MK 92, seemed tailor-made for the small vessels smugglers use. "It's ideal for tracking small contacts, and its over-the-horizon tracking allows us to remain covert during counter-drug operations."

Even the ship's engine room caters to counter-narcotics missions with a variable pitch propeller and gas turbine engines. The ship can go from ahead flank to back

full in a drug smuggler's heartbeat. In fact, *Halyburton* can come to a complete stop in only two lengths of the ship, all maneuvering characteristics which are useful when the vessels you're trying to catch are typically no bigger than the helicopter bird-dogging it.

Engineering aside, it's the crew that ultimately makes the difference between success and failure and conducting counter-narcotics operations successfully is at the very heart of being a Sailor.

According to LCDR Steven Glover, *Halyburton* executive officer, "Conducting counter-drug operations is deck seamanship and small boat handling at its very finest."

During interaction with a suspected drug smuggling or drug smuggling support vessel, nearly all facets of the ship's crew are used. From the ship's navigation party who must drive the 453 foot-long ship within hundreds of yards of a vessel the size of a life raft, to the small boat-handling crew that raises, lowers, transfers and maintains the ship's rigid hull inflatable

LAW ENFORCEMENT PHASES OF DRUG OPERATIONS

PHASE 1—*Halyburton* arrives on scene of a suspected drug smuggling vessel.

PHASE 2—Tactical control of *Halyburton* shifts to U.S. Coast Guard District 11, and *Halyburton* raises the U.S. Coast Guard flag under the American flag. The LEDET begins its boarding process.

PHASE 3—Indication is given that seizure of evidence and detaining of personnel will take place.

PHASE 4—The evolution ends with the offloading of the detainees and evidence.

NOTE: Throughout Phases 1 through 3 the small boat handling team will load and unload countless LEDET and ship's own VBSS team members, detainees and evidence.



▲ An SH-60B Seahawk LAMPS III helicopter keeps a close eye on a suspected drug smuggling vessel during counter-drug operations. The helicopter and its support personnel are assigned to HSL-48, Det. 7 homeported in Mayport, Fla.



◀ Counter-drug operations are tedious procedures. Here, U.S. Coast Guard Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Travis Katzer rests his head waiting for permission to board a suspected drug smuggling vessel.

▼ GSM3 Kenon Samuel, a member of USS Halyburton's Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team climbs back aboard the ship after providing security support for U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 personnel searching a suspected drug smuggling support vessel.



boat (RHIB) throughout a boarding, everyone participates.

Halyburton's first boarding lasted 27 hours, and her Sailors got plenty of operational experience that pushed them well beyond familiarity and into instinct.

Throughout the operation, U.S. Coast Guardsmen and *Halyburton* Sailors worked seamlessly for a successful mission. It's a partnership that has yielded promising results. Last year the narcotics interdiction industry quietly posted their best year ever for seizures.

"This is one of the best crews we've worked with," said Coast Guard Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Triado Gustavo, U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 Assistant Officer in Charge. "From the day we stepped aboard *Halyburton*, we were treated like one of the

crew, and we won't forget them."

With each success for *Halyburton's* joint CoastGuard/Navy team, Sailor's like CS1 Christopher Jefferson take satisfaction in knowing the battles they win at sea have a positive impact on the streets back home.



Pinsky is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200502/feature_2/

▼ U.S. Coast Guard Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Scott Luks escorts a detainee aboard USS Halyburton (FFG40) during counter-drug operations.



► **SA Frank Kuras**, a deck seaman aboard USS *Ashland* (LSD 48), prepares for an at-bat during the All-Navy baseball team's game against the Marine Corps at PETCO Park in San Diego.



Barely out of
boot camp, a brand-new
Sailor plays his way onto
the all-Navy baseball squad

Story and photos by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig





▲ **Like their professional peers,** Kuras and his teammates spend a large portion of their pre- and post-practice time signing baseballs and bats. The team then uses the autographed memorabilia to help promote their season at commands throughout the San Diego area.

► **Kuras' memory** of lost family members is never far away when he takes the field. On the bill of his baseball cap, he pens a small tribute to his brother, who was killed in a car accident in 1997.

They're the kind of moments that make baseball fans stand in admiration.

A scoreless game, top of the second, nobody on and nobody out. A ball is ripped up the middle. It looks like a rally-starter, zipping over the infield grass with eyes on center field, but the shortstop thinks it looks like an out. He breaks to his left with three quick strides and a belly-flop dive. He lands with a jersey full of dirt and a fistful of ball, and, before you can blink, he twists up and wings it to first for an out. One down, and the crowd gathered for the game is buzzing.

But little do they know the shortstop is nowhere near done. Fourth inning, now it's 1-0. A bouncer slowly rolls to the left of the pitcher's mound. The shortstop dashes in with his bare hand, looking ...

"Hey Kuras!" a voice cries out from the crowd. "Wake up man! We need more trays and silverware up here!" With that, Seaman Apprentice Frank Kuras, a deck seaman serving his time as a food service attendant aboard USS *Ashland* (LSD 48), knows his daydream is officially over.

These reality-stained interruptions occur often for Kuras, a native of Rhode Island with plenty of reasons to daydream. That happens when you spend your first summer in the Navy stationed on a baseball diamond.

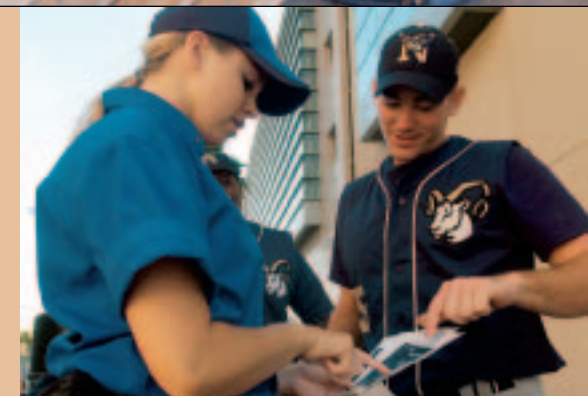
Kuras, the starting shortstop for the All-Navy baseball team, has lived that life; and it affects him to this day.

"Playing baseball has really given me a lot to think about during slow times at work," Kuras said with a slightly watered-down



▲ **Emotions can run low** during games. Here, Kuras sits in the visitors' dugout at PETCO Park after the Marine Corps scored the game-winning run in a 6-5 loss in the team's biggest game of the season.

◀ **Kuras and his teammates** relax before taking the field at PETCO Park in San Diego, the home of Major League Baseball's Padres. The team was waiting for the finish of a Padres-Dodgers duel prior to playing the all-Marine Corps squad.



▲ **Almost as important** to the players as practice is the promotion of the team and their games throughout the season. Here, Kuras, with teammate Jameek Long at his side, gives a handful of fliers to a PETCO Park attendant outside the stadium the day before the Marine Corps game. She would later pass the fliers out to spectators as they entered the park for that day's San Diego Padre's game.

Boston accent. "But I wouldn't call it daydreaming; it's more like replaying. I replay stuff that happened in my ballgames all the time."

Sounds like your typical athlete-turned-Sailor. But Kuras' athletic memories are anything but typical. His recollections highlight a path that led him from boot camp to shortstop for the All-Navy baseball team in less than a month.

"It all happened so quick," Kuras said. "I went from [joining the Navy and] believing

that my baseball days were a thing of the past to being right back in the thick of things. It was really just a matter of me getting to *Ashland* at the right time."

For Kuras, the right time came literally within days of what would have been the wrong time. If he had arrived a mere three days later, he would have missed his chance altogether.

"When he was checking in here, I asked him what he liked to do for fun, and he told me that he played baseball all of his life," said

LTJG Matt Lebaschi, Kuras' original division officer. "So I told him he ought to go to the tryouts that weekend. I thought it would be a good experience for him to meet some



▲ **Batting practice**, as one would imagine, takes up a large part of Kuras' time when the team isn't playing games. "I do it so much, I could probably do it with my eyes closed," he said.

◀ **The Navy baseball squad** provided Kuras with a constant schedule of practices and games to fill his time. Practices consisted of the usual baseball fare, including tracking down ground balls.

new people and get involved with something early in his time here."

Lebaschi didn't know Kuras had different thoughts in mind, though. For him, it wasn't about getting out and meeting new people. "When I heard about the tryouts, I knew I was going to make [the team]," Kuras said cracking a half-smile. "There was no way I wasn't going to make it. Baseball always came really easy for me."

As a teenager growing up in Rhode Island, Kuras had a reputation as an exceptional baseball talent. It all started in Little

League and expanded when he reached Coventry High School. There, Kuras cultivated his skills, becoming known as a supreme threat at the plate (he has two four-home run games to his credit), and a slick fielder on the diamond.

He took home All-State accolades at shortstop for Coventry before moving on to Rhode Island College in Providence, where he played two seasons before leaving college. His baseball education didn't end there, as he continued playing with a semi-professional team while working for a New England-based construction company.

"So altogether I played every year from the time I was 5 or 6," Kuras said. "I've had a lot of experience in all kinds of situations."

That experience showed at the team tryouts, according to Navy Baseball director LCDR Terry Allvord. "The thing that struck us was that it was obvious he had played at a high level recently," he said. "He had the talent, and he was a good find for us in Norfolk."

So, after residing aboard *Ashland* for approximately 96 hours, the kid who hadn't even completed half of his check-in sheet was getting a quick lesson in some of the things NOT taught in recruit training. "When I found out I was going to the next round [of tryouts], I was told I needed to route a chit to get permission. But first I had to figure out what a chit was," Kuras said with a chuckle. "Man, I was totally lost."

Kuras was in San Diego one month later, and, after shining in another tryout, it became obvious that his "temporary" orders would not be so temporary. It was something that even surprised his supporters.

"Making the team meant he was going to be out there for several months playing with the team," Lebaschi said. "Not bad for a guy that I really never imagined would be able to make an impression [at the Norfolk tryout]."

While making the team seemed easy to Kuras, the transition from the boot camp to the baseball Navy wasn't as smooth. "I had a little bit of trouble adjusting at first, with constantly calling some of my officer teammates 'Sir.' That didn't sit too well with them at first," Kuras said.

On the Navy baseball team, there is no discrimination between officer and enlisted personnel. They all add up to make one team with one goal – winning baseball games. To that end, the Navy baseball team spends a month after tryouts practicing and setting their player rotations before playing a summer schedule that includes upward of 50 games.

Kuras and his teammates, including some former college and professional minor league players, played most of their games in the San Diego area, matching up with local semi-pro, professional scout and area All-Star teams. When not playing games, they were keeping up their practice routine, with daily workouts punctuating off days.

"This is a competitive team," Allvord said. "We recognize this team's public relations impact, but first and foremost, we want to show that we have some good ballplayers. Winning games is the most important thing."

Every game on the schedule, though, takes a back seat to the one at the end of the season. Every year, the Navy baseball slate culminates in an all-military clash with the Marine Corps active-duty team.

During Kuras' rookie season, the Navy lost a 6-5 heartbreaker at PETCO Park, the brand-new home of the San Diego Padres. "It was my first time ever playing in a major league park," Kuras said of the experience. "It was probably my biggest thrill with the team, even though we lost the game. That's something that is still hard to think about."

With the team's constant game-related traveling and practicing, it's easy to understand how some things get lost in the shuffle. But one thing not lost on Kuras is his relationship with his wife, Nicole.

Since Kuras was on the Navy team on temporary orders, Nicole was not able to join him in San Diego. "It wasn't always the easiest thing to go through," Nicole said of their separation. "The trick was to go out and find something to do. The first thing I did was go out and find a job that would take my attention."

But even with a job, there was a lot of time to fill during Kuras' four-month foray with the team. "There were some lonely



▲ **The baseball spirit** is evident even in Kuras's free time, as he plays umpire during an impromptu game of wiffle ball that broke out just outside the team's barracks at the 32nd Street Naval Base. The team was waiting for the arrival of vans that would take them to PETCO Park for their grudge match with the Marine Corps.

▼ **The Navy baseball** team is made up of only the very best of those who tried out. That's reflected in the team's private T-shirt, which shows the ratio of players who made the team versus those who weren't quite good enough.



times, sure," Nicole said with tears beginning to well up in her eyes. "But we had plenty of phone calls, and I was even able to go out on one trip to see him play in Las Vegas. The way I see it, I would rather have him gone for a few months playing baseball than deployed to God-knows-where."

It wasn't the first time she had helped him get by, either.

After Kuras' two-year stint at Rhode Island College, Nicole supported his decision to continue playing baseball, even if there wasn't big league success to look forward to. "I knew he loved the game," she said. "After playing as long as he had, I knew it would be hard for him to even imagine not playing. The decision on my part was pretty simple."

In those days, Kuras' baseball season meant long days of construction work followed by time-consuming practices and games in front of crowds numbering in the teens. It wasn't exactly playing in front of sellout crowds at Fenway Park, but it was better than being an "ex"-ballplayer.

"She's right, I couldn't have just quit playing altogether," Kuras said. "Even if I wasn't working to become a major-leaguer, I just wanted to play. I *had* to play."

But, all athletes know that their glory days must end sometime, whether it's Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle or a kid playing his heart out because he loves the game. In this respect, Kuras is no different.

He thought the end occurred in December 2003, when he decided to join the Navy. "I told my wife that joining the Navy meant baseball was over for me. I figured I had no option for it," he said. "And believe it or not, I was okay with that. I just wanted to be able to support her and improve our life together. The Navy was the way for me."

That made Kuras' decision to try out for the Navy team all the more surprising to Nicole. "I thought baseball was over, but I should have known better," she said, throwing her head back with a giggle. "That weekend, we had family coming in to help us settle in, so they had a surprise, too, when they saw he wasn't here."

For now, though, Nicole has no need to worry about Frank playing baseball games. After the team's season ended with the loss to the Marine Corps, Frank drove cross-country to their Virginia apartment, and, besides the occasional underway period with *Ashland*, he has been home every night.

Sleeping in his own bed isn't the only difference between Kuras' time in San Diego and his life in Norfolk, though. Upon returning to *Ashland*, the starting shortstop for the All-Navy baseball team traded in his glove and time on the baseball diamond for dishes and work in the scullery when he began work as a food service attendant.

He had gone from spraying base hits all over the field to spraying down dishes on the mess deck. The Sailor who had to unlearn many of the things he learned in boot camp to play ball, now had to learn them again.

"It wasn't as hard a transition as you would think," he said of his return to the sea-going Navy. "It's not as if I didn't know it was coming. I just had to put that stuff aside

and pick it up again when I needed it."

And unlike many a Sailor, Kuras insists he enjoys his new job. "It really isn't bad," he said. "It doesn't compare to playing baseball for a living, but what does? I make the most out of it."

The big question in his head now is whether he'll be back for another season on the diamond. If schedules hold as they look now, *Ashland* will be deploying during what would be Kuras' second baseball season. "It still could happen," Kuras said. "I'll have to drop a chit and see if my command will let me go, but other people [on the team] have done it before."

But Kuras isn't trying to get his hopes up quite yet. "I know it's going to be harder to let me go this time around, so

I'm not looking forward to it yet. I'll just keep working and do what the Navy tells me to do."

And if he ends up not returning for another season, he'll still have those daydreams. ... ❧

Ludwig is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200502/feature_3/



► **No longer are there** late-afternoon workouts for Kuras on USS *Ashland*. Taking out mess deck trash is now his main priority before going home in the evenings.

“P ictures are important; however, coming home in one piece is most important,” said 17-year Gunner’s Mate 1st Class (SW) Don R. Montgomery, the only gunner stationed at Fleet Combat Camera, Atlantic.

Most gunner’s mates around the Navy teach basic gun handling for watch standing. But, Montgomery’s primary job is to train combat camera personnel in small arms and ammunition for combat. Sailors assigned to Fleet Combat Camera often deploy rapidly to hostile locations around the world where historic events are taking place. They integrate with Marines, Navy SEALs and other special warfare units on a moment’s notice, so their knowledge of weapons could mean the difference between life and death.

“When videographers and photographers are on assignment, what will be their first reaction when they come under fire?” said Montgomery. “Weapons familiarization is primary for these guys to have what it takes to survive in the real world, and come home with their photographs.”

Montgomery is a competition shooter on the Atlantic Ordnance

Command Shooting team, a member of the International Defense Pistol Association. He trains the Sailors at least once a month on the range in the proper use of the 9mm pistol, and the M-16 and M-60 rifles.

“I don’t just teach the basics,” Montgomery said. “Being able to transition from a 9mm, camera or M-16 and doing that safely as well as taking cover are part of the training I hold on the range. This is unique, advanced training necessary for the nature of the job of being a combat photographer. I take pride in my training of these Sailors especially when their level of knowledge reassures me that I have been successful in teaching the fundamentals of safe and proper weapons handling.”

Not only do these combat camera Sailors know how to protect themselves while documenting naval activities around the world, they also return safely back to their command thanks to the effort and professional training by one of the most unique gunners in the Navy, Don Montgomery. ☛

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

ON TARGET

Focus on.
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Eye on the Fleet

Eye on the Fleet is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for **high impact**, quality photography from **Sailors** in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in **action**.

► Aviation boatswain's mates make an assault on a large-scale mock aircraft fire during their final evaluation in the Fire Protection Apprentice Course at the Louis F. Garland DOD Fire Academy.

Photo by GT1Patrick D. Wormsley



◀ SN Danielle Hopper paints a rat guard used for mooring lines aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73).

Photo by PHAN Michael Blackwell II



▼ Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 prepare for convoy training during the battalion's field exercise at Camp Shelby, Miss.

Photo by JO1 Dennis Herring



◀ Personnel assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 11, Det. 1, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., fast rope from an SH-60F *Seahawk* onto the flight deck of USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72).

Photo by PH3 Gabriel Piper



▼ Search and Rescue Swimmer, PN3 Gerardo Arbulu, gives the signal to be raised out of the water after rescuing the simulated victim, named "Oscar," during a man overboard drill aboard USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49).

Photo by JO2 Brian Biller



▼ Air department personnel assemble prior to a night flightdeck fire drill aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76).

Photo by PH2 Chad McNeeley



To be considered, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station**. Name all identifiable people within the photo and include important information about what is happening, where the photo was taken and the date. Commands with digital photo capability can send attached .jpg files to: navyvisualnews@navy.mil

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Portsmouth's Special Delivery

Story by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig

This time of year, I become a pretty tired guy. No need to cry for me though; it's just something that comes with having four children at home. Between all of their normal daily needs, my wife and I shuttle them back-and-forth to school, Tiger Cubs meetings, Daisy Scouts get-togethers, dance classes, and various sports (soccer, baseball, T-ball) games and practices.

The February sports schedule clouds things even more for me. As a guy who openly admits to planning his entire life around ESPN (just ask my wife), I have loads of NBA and college basketball, baseball's spring training and the occasional hockey score to keep up with. It makes for some late nights, and that's before I feel the physical ills that ravage me with the end of the NFL football season.

Oh, and don't let me forget I have two kids' birthday parties to plan, so I usually feel as tired as a marathon runner after crossing the finish line inside Central Park.

But with all that going on, I still have nothing on the men and women who worked for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Labor and Delivery department last September. After what they went through, I wouldn't be against giving their staff an early retirement with full pay.

You see, at Portsmouth, their cadre of Navy-style Cliff Huxtables delivered a record-breaking 424 babies during the month ironically known for Labor Day.

Now, don't fool yourselves. That's a big number, 424. With the 424 births, Portsmouth set a record for all Army, Navy and Air Force hospitals. That's more than the number of days in a year. A number that big makes the athletes I worship nightly green with envy. Dollar green, that is.

Confused? Think about it. During Portsmouth's "laborious"

month, 14 babies were delivered each day on average at the newly-christened Navy Baby Factory Portsmouth.

In the NBA, 14 points per day puts you at par with players such as Antawn Jamison. Jamison, with his 14.1 points per game last season, raked in \$12.6 million for his efforts. Ray Lewis, hailed in many circles as the NFL's best player, averaged 11.43 tackles a game in his best season, 1997. On that scale, Portsmouth's 14 average would get a salary at least equal to Lewis' \$10 million.

And on the extreme end of our 14s is baseball. Fourteen strikeouts a day would easily top Randy Johnson, MLB's overriding pitching force, who averaged a *measly* 10.62 strikeouts for every nine innings pitched. He made \$16.5 million last season, one of the top salaries in the game.

So what did 14-a-day get the Labor and Delivery staff? Nothing but more work! It seems several selfless nurses allowed themselves to be called in for extra work on their days off. Good luck getting your favorite overpaid athlete to do that, even if it did mean a few extra dollars.

On the busiest day of the month, the hospital brought 22 new lives into the world. That's 22 newborns who got to meet their parents for the very first time. In all seriousness, even a sports-crazed lunatic like me cannot make sports comparisons to something like that. I can't imagine the pressure of playing a game, even with the world as a captive audience, being anywhere close to the anxiety that comes with making sure a baby is able to breathe on its own outside the womb.

As someone who has experienced the joys (and pains) that come with child rearing, I tip my cap to you.

You're all millionaires in my book. 🍷

Ludwig is a photojournalist for All Hands.



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